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**First Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa
(StatCom-Africa I)**

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
21– 23 January 2008

Report of the First Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa

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Acronyms

AAPA	Addis Ababa Plan of Action for Statistical Development in Africa in the 1990s
ACBF	African Capacity Building Foundation
ACS	African Centre for Statistics
AfDB	African Development Bank
AFRISTAT	Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa
AHSCP	African Household Survey Capability Programme
ASCC	African Statistical Coordination Committee
ASSD	Africa Symposium on Statistical Development
AUC	African Union Commission
CCSA	Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities
CESD	Centre Européen de formation des Statisticiens Economistes des Pays en voie de développement
CODI	Committee on Development Information
CPI	Consumer price index
COMESA	Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa
ECOWAS	Economic Community of West African States
ENSEA	Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée
FASDEV	Forum on Statistical Development in Africa
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
IAEG	Inter-Agency and Expert Group
ICLS	International Conference of Labour Statisticians
ICP- Africa	International Comparison Programme for Africa
IFORD	Institut Régional de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques
ILO	International Labour Organization
INS	Institut national de la statistique
INSEE	Institut National de la Statistique et des Études Économiques
INWENT	Internationale Weiterbildung und Entwicklung
ISAE	Institute for Statistics and Applied Economics
ISI	International Statistical Institute
MDG	Millennium Development Goal
NSA	National Statistical Association
NSDS	National Strategy for the Development of Statistics
NSO	National Statistical Office
NSS	National Statistical System
OECD	Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development
PARIS21	Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21 st Century
PRS	Poverty Reduction Strategy
REC	Regional Economic Community
RPHC	Round of Population and Housing Census
RRSF	Reference Regional Strategic Framework
SADC	Southern Africa Development Community
SNA	System of National Accounts
STATCOM	Statistical Commission
STPA	Statistical Training Programme for Africa
SYSCOA	Accounting System of West African States
UEMOA	Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine

UN	United Nations
UNCC	United Nations Conference Centre
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECA	United Nations Economic Commission for Africa
UNSC	United Nations Statistical Commission
UNSD	United Nations Statistics Division

Summary

The African Centre of Statistics (ACS) of the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) organized the first meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa I) from 21 to 23 January 2008, at the United Nations Conference Centre (UNCC) in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The theme of StatCom-Africa I was “Scaling up Statistical Development in Africa”.

StatCom-Africa is the ECA subsidiary body in charge of its statistics subprogramme (Subprogramme 9). Following the ECA-wide repositioning exercise in August 2006, the Statistics Division was re-established under the rubric of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS). It was therefore imperative to put a new subsidiary body in place specifically devoted to statistics and statistical development on the continent. The last meeting of the ECA Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, held in Addis Ababa from 2 to 3 April 2007, endorsed the creation of StatCom-Africa as the new subsidiary body in charge of statistics.

It was expected to provide a forum for discussions and decisions on all aspects of statistical development of interest to its members within the framework of the policies and procedures of the United Nations and subject to the general supervision of the Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

This first meeting took stock of ongoing efforts in the field of statistics and facilitated exchange of experiences and best practices by countries, subregional, regional, and international organizations, as well as development partners, in statistical development on the continent.

Key agenda items of the inaugural meeting of StatCom-Africa included the formal launching of the Statistical Commission and setting up of a strong bureau and various working groups according to the priority needs in statistical development on the continent:

- (a) Development indicators,
- (b) Informal sector,
- (c) National Accounts,
- (d) Data Management,
- (e) Statistical Training, and
- (f) Gender statistics.

During the conference, ACS hosted an award ceremony on behalf of the African Statistical Community. Prizes were awarded to five statisticians who had done outstanding work in statistics in Africa.

The meeting came up with strong recommendations and called on African countries to mainstream statistics into national planning and budgeting processes to ensure that statistical activities were adequately funded and seen as a key element in the development process, rather than as an add-on. Development partners were also called upon to provide sustainable technical and financial assistance for the collection, processing, analysis and use of data, particularly data necessary for monitoring the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

StatCom-Africa will meet every two years, but its working groups will meet at least once a year to monitor progress and take strategic decisions on statistical work in Africa. The next meeting of StatCom-Africa is scheduled for 18 to 22 January 2010 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Report of the First Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa Addis Ababa, 21 to 23 January 2008

A. Attendance

1. StatCom-Africa I held its first meeting at UNCC in Addis Ababa from 21 to 23 January 2008.

Member States:

2. The session was attended by delegates from the following 43 members States of UNECA: Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Chad, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

3. The country delegations mainly comprised Heads of National Statistics Offices (NSOs), National Statistical Councils, and Poverty Reduction Strategy Units.

Observers:

4. The meeting was also attended by observers from the following non-African States, as well as international, regional, subregional and national organizations and institutions.

5. Non-African States: Canada (Canadian International Development Agency), Germany (InWent), France (National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (INSEE) and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), Mexico (National Statistical Office), Russia, and the United Kingdom (Department for International Development (DFID)).

6. International, Regional and Subregional Organizations and Institutes: Partnership In Statistics for development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), World Bank, EUROSTAT, African Development Bank (AfDB), African Union (AU), Islamic Development Bank, Google.org, Ibrahim Index of African Governance, Southern African Development Community (SADC), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), Economic and Statistical Observatory for Sub-Saharan Africa (AFRISTAT), and Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA).

7. Training Institutes: Institut de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD), Makerere University's Institute of Statistics and Applied Economics (ISAE), Ecole Nationale Supérieure de Statistique et d'Economie Appliquée (ENSEA), and John Hopkins University.

8. Statistical Associations: Association des Statisticiens du Cameroun (Cameroon), Ethiopian Statistical Association (Ethiopia), Association des Statisticiens du Gabon (Gabon), Ghana Statistical Association (Ghana), Statistical Association (Malawi), Association Sénégalaise pour la Statistique (Senegal), South African Statistical Association (South Africa) Tanzania Statistical Association (Tanzania), Association des Statisticiens et Démographes (Togo), and Uganda Statistical Society (Uganda).

9. United Nations offices: United Nations Statistics Division (UNSD), International Labour Organization (ILO), ILO Subregional Office for Eastern Africa, World Food Programme (WFP) Liaison Office to the African Union and the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA).
10. Others: Award winners, International Statistics consultants, and other prominent personalities.

B. Opening session

Opening statements

11. The Chairman of the last subcommittee of statistics of the Committee on Development Information at CODI-V, the Director of the National Statistical Office (NSO) of Senegal, opened the first meeting of StatCom-Africa and thanked the participants for positively responding to the invitation extended to them by ECA. Statements were also made by the Director of ACS, the Chief Economist of AfDB, and the Executive Secretary of ECA. The Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission delivered the Keynote Address.

Remarks of the Director of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS)

12. Introductory remarks were made by Mr. Ben Kiregyera, Director of ACS. He thanked Mr. Abdoulie Janneh, Executive Secretary of ECA for his prominent role in revamping the statistics function at the Commission. He pointed out that the meeting was cause for a double celebration. Not only did it give the statistical community the opportunity to celebrate ECA's 50 years of service to statistics in Africa but it also provided the opportunity to celebrate the creation of StatCom-Africa as its subsidiary body with overall responsibility for guiding statistics and statistical development in Africa.

13. He noted that StatCom-Africa I had brought together delegations from 43 countries in Africa. As was traditional for this type of meeting, all directors of all statistical offices in Africa had been invited to attend. In addition, invitations had been extended to other persons who played an important part in the development of statistics on the continent: chairpersons of statistical boards, chairpersons of national statistical associations, the managers of poverty reduction units, the directors of regional statistical training centres, the directors of regional economic communities, and members of the editorial board of the African Statistics Journal. The Director of ACS also noted the participation of the Chair of the United Nations Statistical Commission, as well as many senior representatives from development partners.

14. He thanked partners for helping with the organization of StatCom-Africa. These included AfDB, United Nations Statistical Division (UNSD), World Bank, and Partnership in Statistics for Development in the 21st Century (PARIS21), INWENT, French cooperation, International Labour Organization (ILO), Google, AFRISTAT, and Statistics South Africa.

Statement by the Chief Economist of AfDB

15. The Director of the Statistics Department of AfDB made an opening statement on behalf of the Chief Economist of AfDB. He noted the increasing demand for statistics at national, regional and international levels, the requirement for greater government accountability, and the fact that statistical information was now at the centre of the global fight against poverty. These developments posed both an opportunity and a challenge for the statistical community. While acknowledging the efforts made by countries to improve their statistical systems, he stressed that much more needed to be done. Countries

should adopt the National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) as the efficient way forward, and governments were urged to allocate sufficient funding to support statistical activity. AfDB would play a strong supportive role to StatCom-Africa and work with countries and development partners to develop statistics on the continent. The main areas of support would involve scaling up financial support for statistical development.

Opening statement by the Executive Secretary of ECA

16. In welcoming participants, the ECA Executive Secretary noted that the establishment of ACS and the holding of StatCom-Africa I represented the culmination of a long process, aimed at revamping the statistical function at ECA. He said that in its efforts to support countries to meet their data needs, the Commission had established a Statistics Division in 1958. In the 1970s and 1980s it had assisted countries in many areas of statistics, and there were many notable achievements. Starting in the late 1980s, there had been a rapid decline in financial support for statistics, and countries had experienced difficulty in participating in international statistical activities. There had been a corresponding decline in statistical activity and statistical output at ECA. Many organizations had expressed concern about the situation. The Executive Secretary highlighted in particular the contribution made by the Minister of Finance of South Africa in expressing these concerns.

17. With the establishment of ACS and the inter-governmental structure of StatCom-Africa, ECA was in a position to play a key role in supporting statistical development, both at the nationally and international levels. There had also been significant institutional changes in other regional organizations: the statistical function in AfDB had now been raised to Division status, and a statistics unit had been set up in the African Union Commission (AUC).

18. The Executive Secretary noted that the recently adopted Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF) provided the framework to enable African countries to improve their statistics significantly by 2010, the date set for the mid-term review of the framework. There was a need to avoid duplication of effort, and to improve coordination among the respective development partners. In this regard, he was pleased to note that representatives of the main institutions had met in Tunis in September 2007 to discuss coordination of statistical capacity-building efforts in Africa. One notable outcome of that meeting was an agreement between ECA and AfDB for the production of a joint annual statistical yearbook for Africa.

19. Finally, he expressed appreciation for the contribution of the partners and thanked all the participants, especially Mr. Ben Kiregyera, for the roles they played in statistical development.

Keynote Address: “Global Statistical System and Role of the Statistical Commissions”

20. Mr. Gilberto Cavillo, Chairperson of the UN Statistical Commission (UNSC) delivered a keynote address on the global statistical system and the role of statistical commissions. He informed the meeting that for the last two years he has been serving in UNSC and in the Latin American Statistical Commission. He congratulated African countries for the creation of StatCom-Africa and assured them of the support of other statistical commissions. He transmitted the pledge of support and greetings from Mr. Paul Cheung, the Director of UNSD.

21. In his address, he provided a short overview of statistical commissions at the regional level, and outlined key challenges ahead. In recent years, there had been a sharp growth in the global demand for

statistics, due in part to issues such as climate change and the HIV/AIDS crisis. He noted that UNSC had been set up in 1947, with four principal objectives:

- (a) To develop standards and methods of official statistics;
- (b) To compile aggregations of national statistics;
- (c) To strengthen national statistical systems in member States; and
- (d) To coordinate the activities of the global statistical system.

22. Among the recent changes, he noted, had been a shift in emphasis from a debate on indicators to one on statistical capacity building, and a new focus on cooperation among development partners. He described the work of two regional commissions: the Conference of European Statisticians, which was supported by the Economic Commission for Europe and which met annually; and the Statistical Conference of the Americas, which was supported by the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean and which met every two years.

23. Mr Cavillo also highlighted some of the main challenges facing the newly established StatCom-Africa. At country level, there was a need for more regional cooperation. New working groups might have to be organized to look at particular issues. StatCom-Africa would require the continuing strong support of the Executive Secretary, and the ACS secretariat was urged to follow up on decisions reached at meetings of StatCom-Africa. The major challenge, he felt, was to ensure that StatCom-Africa became the authoritative body for discussion of all issues relating to statistics.

C. Award ceremony

24. A special ceremony was held to mark the 50th anniversary of ECA. First, the Chair of the Friends of ECA bestowed an award on the Executive Secretary, in recognition of his efforts as a champion of statistics in Africa and of his major contribution in revamping the statistical function at UNECA. ACS then bestowed the Africa Statistics Awards on five persons who had, over many years, played leading roles in the development of statistics on the continent. The five persons honoured were: Mr. Julien Amegandjin, Mr. Oladejo Ajayi, Mr. Kweku deGraft-Johnson, Mr. Lamine Diop, and Mr. Pali Lehohla. These awards were made on behalf of the statistical community in Africa, and with the concurrence of the African Statistics Coordination Committee.

25. Four of the award winners present made statements on the lessons learnt from some of the best initiatives in statistical development in Africa.

Statement by Mr. Julien Amegandjin

26. Mr. Amegandjin described the experience of two training institutions (Centre Européen de formation des Statisticiens Economistes des Pays en voie de développement (CESD) in Paris and Institut Régional de Formation et de Recherche Démographiques (IFORD) in Yaounde). He considered that the successes they achieved in the 1970s and 1980s were due largely to their financing modalities, which had provided a stable existence. IFORD was created by ECA to train demographers. It was funded by donors until 1982. All students had scholarships, which were part of the budgets of the institutions. Later, when the funding mechanism was changed, and countries themselves were expected to pick up an increasing share (finally, 100 per cent) of the training costs, the systems collapsed. He emphasized the role of statistical associations in advocating for training as well as individuals roles in advancing the activities of the training centres.

27. Referring to training as key to producing skilled statisticians, he urged beneficiary countries and the regional economic communities (RECs) to help the training centres with scholarships to trainees. He recommended that ECA should support the funding of these training programmes.

Statement by Mr. Oladejo Ajayi

28. Mr. Ajayi reviewed the main statistical developments in Africa in recent years. He noted the ECA successes in the 1970s and 1980s (African Household Survey Capability Programme (AHSCP), Statistical Training Programme for Africa (STPA), African Census Programme, and the national accounts programme), which came to an end when funding was withdrawn. The main lesson learnt from the failure of the Addis Ababa Plan of Action in the 1990s (AAPA) was that the preparation of action plans must be fully participatory, and there must be adequate advocacy and monitoring of the plan. He noted the various initiatives in statistics that had been started since 1999. The successful implementation of NSDS would help to bring all stakeholders together, and provide a stronger advocacy for statistics. The Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), in turn, signalled a fundamentally redefined approach to statistical development, by guiding statistical capacity-building activities, with the support of development partners. He called for dedication and hard work by the statistical community, to make statistics work for Africa.

29. He further indicated that partnership, sustainable funding of programmes, unselfish leadership, full participation of stakeholders, the commitment of governments and dialogue between the producers and users of data were very important for statistical development in Africa.

Statement by Mr. Lamine Diop

30. Mr. Diop highlighted three best initiatives: STPA, AFRISTAT and PARIS21. STPA provided a valuable framework for the exchange of ideas among training centres, and it helped the centres to mobilize additional support from donors. STPA could not be self-sufficient by itself, but it helped to stimulate other training initiatives. STPA was adopted by UNECA in 1978 to train statisticians. It was funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The training programmes under STPA were designed for French- and English-speaking African countries. A training centre was also established for Portuguese-speaking countries in Lisbon, Portugal. The STPA mobilized additional support from other donors. However, the funds were not adequate for running its programmes.

31. AAPA, which was put in place in the early 1990s, helped to establish AFRISTAT in 1993. AFRISTAT was set up following a decision by leaders of member countries to strengthen their economic integration. It had a dual mission: to improve the quality and flow of statistics in its member countries, and to strengthen their statistical capacity. It currently had 19 members, predominantly Francophone but also Portuguese, and was an example of a system that worked. AFRISTAT had developed expertise in areas such as census and survey methodologies. It tried to create a conducive environment for economic integration in the CFA zone. It had contributed a lot to the economic and social development of the subregion and had become the centre of excellence in statistical development. It carried out programmes for the benefit of its member States and had recently adopted a strategic plan on poverty reduction and on the use of statistical information. Further, it had built a common system that was useful for data comparability.

32. PARIS21 was set up at the OECD by the international community in 1999. It aimed at promoting evidence-based decision-making. He noted its very active website and the many workshops held. Although PARIS21 and other institutions were active in the field, absorption capacity in Africa remained limited, due to weak management and lack of skilled human resources. There was a need to provide adequate funds for statistical offices, organize and better manage the offices, and support statistical training centres.

33. Mr. Diop stressed the need for: better coordination; addressing shortage of human resources; harmonized assistance from partners, and for governments to equip the NSSes with adequate human and financial resources. He further urged statisticians to work hard to take up the emerging challenges, and stressed the need to support the training centres with scholarships, infrastructure and equipment, and to support countries that were emerging from conflicts.

Statement by Mr. Pali Lahohla

34. Mr. Lehohla recalled for participants the exciting progress that had been made in statistics in Africa in the past two years, beginning with the report to the United Nations General Assembly in 2005 by the then Secretary-General. It had urged action to fill the large data gaps that existed in Africa in respect of indicators for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and noted the lack of interest shown by African countries in conducting population censuses. At a later meeting, Statistics South Africa was tasked with helping to address the challenge. This led to establishment of the African Symposium on Statistical Development. So far, three meetings had been held, all focusing on population censuses. Mr. Lehohla emphasized the need for the statistical community to have a high sense of mission, in order to plan and execute an effective strategy for statistical development.

35. He mentioned initiatives such as the International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa) and the RRSF and pointed out the need to mobilize resources from development partners and political support for the countries that were emerging from conflicts. He advocated continued support to UNECA, to implement its programmes in a sustainable manner with the mobilized funds required

36. He mentioned the peace agreement signed in Sudan that would help the country to undertake its 2008 Population and Housing Census. He urged member States to support Sudan in implementing the 2008 census programme.

D. Plenary Session I

Election of officers

37. The StatCom-Africa I elected the following Bureau by acclamation:

Chair: South Africa
Vice-chair: Morocco
Second Vice-chair: Niger
First Rapporteur : Uganda
Second Rapporteur : Cameroon

Agenda and organization of work

38. StatCom-Africa I amended its provisional agenda as contained in document E/UNECA/STATCOM/1/add.1. The agenda adopted read as follows:

- 1. Opening ceremony**
 - a. Welcoming Address by the Executive Secretary;
 - b. Statement of the Chief Economist of AfDB
 - c. Keynote address on “The Global Statistical System and Role of the Statistical Commissions”
- 2. “Celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of UNECA”**
 - a. Award Ceremony
 - b. Statements on “Lessons learnt from some of the best initiatives in statistical development on the continent” by the Award Winners;
- 3. Election of officers;**
- 4. Adoption of the agenda and organizational matters;**
- 5. Goals and objectives of the StatCom-Africa;**
- 6. Visualizing world development**
- 7. Reports on:**
 - a. African Statistical Coordinating Committee
 - b. Population and housing census
 - c. National Statistical Associations
 - d. Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) monitoring
 - e. International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa)
 - f. Reference Regional Strategic Framework (RRSF) implementation
 - g. Basic economic statistics and national accounts
 - h. Environmental statistics
 - i. Employment statistics
 - j. Statistical training
- 8. Breakaway sessions on:**
 - a. MDG monitoring
 - b. National accounts
 - c. Informal sector
 - d. Data management
 - e. Statistical training
 - f. Gender statistics
- 9. Report from the working groups**
- 10. Upcoming major events**
- 11. Programmatic issues**
- 12. Provisional agenda and date for the second session of StatCom-Africa**
- 13. Main conclusions and recommendations of the first session of StatCom-Africa**
- 14. Closing ceremony**

Goals and objectives of StatCom-Africa

39. The UNECA Secretariat made a presentation on the goals and objectives of StatCom-Africa, as its subsidiary body in charge of Statistics and Statistical Capacity Building (subprogramme 9). It aimed to provide expert advice on the ACS programme of work and on statistical development in Africa. Its resolutions provided inputs to the Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Key issues:

40. The meeting discussed the following issues:

(a) As a subsidiary organ of UNECA, StatCom was meant to convene its sessions every two years. However, given the challenges faced by African countries, some participants suggested the need to meet more frequently, say every year;

(b) For the year when StatCom-Africa held its sessions, it would serve as a link to the global system, taking account of the inputs from the annual meeting of ASSD and from meetings of the African Statistical Coordination Committee. As a decision-making intergovernmental mechanism, its recommendations would be forwarded to the African Conference of Ministers for endorsement and be the link inputted from African countries to the global United Nations Statistical Commission;

(c) For the year when StatCom-Africa was not organized, the Bureau of StatCom-Africa would serve as the mechanism for linking African countries to the UN StatCom and the African Conference of Ministers, taking account of the recommendations made by the annual meeting of ASSD and meetings of ASCC.

Visualizing world development

41. Mr. Hans Rosling, co-founder of the Gapminder Foundation, and now working for Google.org, presented the Gapminder software. Gapminder, he said, was a non-profit venture promoting sustainable global development and achievement of the MDGs by increased use and understanding of statistics and other information about social, economic and environmental development at local, national and global levels.

Key issues:

42. The meeting discussed the following issues:

(a) The importance of having more stakeholders and partners in the data-dissemination process and new ways of presenting this data to the public were mentioned;

(b) The Gapminder software was the product of seven years of work and was available for free on the Internet. Africa should be able to make use of this software before the other continents. Since the continent was lagging behind in the use of Internet, by the time it progressed in its use, the Internet would have shifted from personal computers to cell phones. Therefore, the effort now was to come up with a version that worked on cell phones.

E. Plenary Session II

African Statistical Coordination Committee

43. AfDB made a presentation of the outcomes of the meeting held in Tunis in September 2007 that resulted to the creation of the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC).

Key issues:

44. The meeting discussed the following issues:

(a) At present, the four regional organizations - UNECA, AfDB, AUC and the African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) - constituted the main membership of ASCC, with little representation from subregional organizations and NSOs;

(b) The importance of having subregional organizations in the Coordinating Committee was stressed. It was also mentioned that the African Statistical Coordination Committee should follow the work programme of the Coordination Committee of Statistical Activities which was a global version of ASCC, to avoid duplication of efforts. Terms of Reference (TOR) should be prepared for the ASCC members;

(c) Clarification was required on whether the working groups of ASCC should conduct thematic and technical studies. Furthermore, concern was raised about the linkages among ASCC, the bureau of StatCom-Africa and the Friends of UNECA;

(d) It was suggested that the ASCC should also measure and report on the effectiveness of statistical capacity building in Africa, and the sustainability of its financing.

Population and Housing Censuses

45. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat of the Friends of UNECA made two presentations on “Progress made on the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses (2010 RPHC)” and on the “Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD)”.

46. With regard to Population and Housing Censuses in post-conflict countries, six countries, including Angola, DRC, Eritrea and Sudan promised to conduct a population and housing census in the near future. Excepting Angola, five countries set tentative census dates. It was also mentioned that Sudan was different in that it had one government and two systems, namely, southern and national. South Africa announced its commitment to support Sudan in its effort to conduct a population and housing census. Other countries that had the expertise were invited to contact the Statistics General of South Africa by e-mail so they could extend their help.

Key issues:

47. The meeting discussed the following issues:

- (a) Low participation in the 2010 census round by African countries, especially those emerging from conflict;
- (b) There was no specific strategy on how to conduct censuses in difficult situations, such as in countries with inadequate funding and in post-conflict countries;
- (c) At present, six post-conflict countries had been identified as requiring special attention;

National Statistical Associations

48. Under this agenda item, the Secretariat made a presentation on National Statistical Associations. It stressed the importance of strengthening NSAs and encouraged innovative ideas inline with donor interests, involving institutions as members, and having student alumni forums.

Key issues:

49. The meeting discussed the following issues:

- (a) Calling for a resolution that would state that every country should have a statistical association with an agreed upon Code of Ethics, which could be derived from the Code of Ethics of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) so as to avoid writing it from scratch. It was generally recommended that efforts should be exerted to investigate why some associations had ceased to function.
- (b) The African Statistical Association had become defunct, and while ACBF was trying to revive it, there were challenges due to lack of documentation;
- (c) Financing statistical activities was a challenging task, especially in Africa. The next meeting of the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV) should consider this issue. There should be a mechanism to measure statistical development, to help governments and development partners to monitor progress and target support to those countries that most needed it;
- (d) Limited appreciation of the role of the National Statistical Associations and inadequate support from NSOs; and
- (e) Lack of sustainable funding for NSA activities and lack of attractive and engaging programmes;

F. Plenary Session II: reports on various thematic areas

Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)

50. Under this agenda item, UNECA made two presentations on “overview of progress towards the targets of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa” and “MDGs Monitoring: Challenges and Opportunities for African Countries”.

51. The first presentation reviewed progress towards the targets of the MDGs, explored constraints to accelerating progress with emphasis on the need to scale up growth, highlighted key areas that deserved the attention of policymakers, and proposed some recommendations for consideration. The second UNECA presentation covered the new framework of MDG indicators, challenges, remedial measures, role of the UN Regional Commissions and status of the MDGs Africa Working Group.

52. UNSD made a presentation on the United Nations MDG data collection system. The presentation focused on the global monitoring mechanism on the implementation of MDGs, the newly added MDG targets and indicators, UN MDG database and metadata and the need for transition from the indicators debate to a capacity-building debate.

Key issues

53. The meeting discussed the following issues:

- (a) Involvement of countries in assessing the status of implementation of MDGs;
- (b) Use of countries household surveys for monitoring MDGs;
- (c) Importance of establishing coordinated and comprehensive national statistical systems under the lead of NSOs;
- (d) Development of a well-defined standard reporting system with a common database;
- (e) Strengthening of NSOs with technical and financial capacity-building programmes;
- (f) Collaboration with higher educational institutions during the design and implementation of concepts and methodologies; and
- (g) Preparation of national brainstorming workshops and seminars with invitees from sectoral organizations, national institutions and individual experts for effective statistical development.

International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa)

54. Under this agenda item, AfDB made a presentation on the Final Results of the International Comparison Programme for Africa highlighting the objectives of ICP-Africa, the approach and results of the survey, the use of ICP data and the way forward.

Key issues

55. The discussion mainly focused on:
- (a) Mechanisms to integrate ICP-Africa in the regular work of NSOs;
 - (b) ICP-Africa to support National Accounts and price statistics activities in NSOs.

Implementation of the RRSF

56. AfDB and ECA reported on the RRSF design and implementation. The presentation highlighted the objective of RRSF, levels of RRSF implementation, monitoring processes, relationship of RRSF strategies and NSDS features and the results of the December 2007 NSDS progress report survey.

Key issues:

57. The meeting discussed the following issues:
- (a) Governments' commitment to NSDS design and implementation;
 - (b) Information sharing on country experiences with successful development and implementation of NSDS; and
 - (c) The importance of the participation of sectoral organizations in the development of NSDS, to achieve shared ownership.

G. Plenary session III: Basic economic statistics and national accounts

Administrative sources

58. IFORD presented a paper on "Revisiting administrative data sources". The presentation underlined the differences between statistical sources, with emphasis on administrative sources. The presenter provided examples of components and sources of administrative data, and some advantages and disadvantages involved in use of administrative sources.

Key issues

59. The meeting discussed the following issues:
- (a) The importance of administrative data sources, usually produced by sectoral ministries, as a key element in the NSS. They had some strong advantages (durability, very little burden on respondents, and interviewers do not need to go out to collect the data), but also some disadvantages (sometimes imprecise definitions, poor coverage, etc.);
 - (b) Possibility of ethical or legal impediments to the use of administrative data; and

(c) Often difficult to use administrative sources. Difficulties in extrapolation of information to cover the whole country.

Business registers in UEMOA and Senegal's experience

60. Senegal presented the work undertaken by UEMOA member countries to establish business registers with emphasis on the feasibility study and the implementation phase. The experience of Senegal was given to underline the process at country level. The feasibility study highlighted the following issues: heterogeneity of accounts used in UEMOA, plurality of balance sheets for the same company, poor appreciation of the productive sector, inadequacy or absence of an enabling institutional environment, the Accounting Standards and the accounting profession, and closing dates of different accounting periods.

61. In UEMOA member States, a common accounting framework was in use, namely the Accounting System of West African States (SYSCOA) with harmonized accounting closing dates. The presenter further highlighted the importance of establishing a proper institutional environment for SYSCOA, at both national and community levels.

Key issues

62. The meeting:

(a) Expressed appreciation for the experience of UEMOA countries that was shared and underlined the importance of a reliable business register for provision of basic data for compilation of reliable national accounts statistics;

(b) Requested that the paper presented by Senegal should be translated into English and widely disseminated.

Environment statistics

63. Under this agenda item, ECA presented a report on the development of a core list of environment indicators. The presenter recalled the various capacity-building initiatives held in the area of environment statistics. He highlighted the outcomes of the workshop held in Addis-Ababa in July 2007, which recommended establishment of a regional task force on environment statistics that would work on a core list of environment indicators, methodology sheets, data collection, and the dissemination process for environment data in Africa.

Key issues

64. The meeting discussed the following issues:

(a) Need to agree on a core set of environmental indicators, because of the important role that environmental issues play in programmes and policies on sustainable development;

(b) African Statistical Yearbook should have a theme on environment;

(c) Further work must be undertaken to identify data gaps;

(d) Establishment of a Task Force on environmental statistics, with three main functions: to identify and describe a core list of environmental indicators for Africa; to prepare a work programme on environmental statistics for the Africa region; and to work closely with the Inter Sectoral Working Group on Environmental Statistics; and

(e) Country participation in the methodological work involved in defining the appropriate set of indicators; and

(f) Technical assistance to enable countries to develop their environmental indicators.

Employment statistics

65. Under this agenda item, ILO made a presentation on “Key Issues Concerning Employment Statistics in Africa”, highlighting the challenges of improving employment and labour statistics. The presenter informed the meeting about ILO capacity-building efforts and the structure of its technical assistance in Africa. He stressed Africa’s commitment to employment statistics as celebrated during the 2007 African Statistics Day and indicated that StatCom-Africa could help in labour statistics. The presenter urged African countries to ratify ILO Convention 160 on employment statistics and called on African countries to have a massive attendance at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians.

Key issues:

66. The meeting discussed the following issues:

(a) Only three African countries had ratified ILO Convention 160, which set out the range of labour statistics that should be collected in each country. Those who ratified were obliged to collect and publish a range of labour statistics (including CPI) as set out in the Convention. Ratification would therefore assist countries to prioritize their needs and secure the necessary resources for this work;

(b) Urgent need for information on employment, unemployment, underemployment, etc. which were best collected through labour force surveys. Also a need for establishment surveys, to assess the demand for labour and the number of new jobs created;

(c) For the MDGs, a new target had been included under MDG 1 (Achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women and young people), with four indicators to measure progress;

(d) Problems experienced by policymakers and statisticians in explaining why unemployment rates were so low in Africa when the official ILO definition was used. Attempts had been made by some countries to change the definition of unemployment so as to produce a figure that accorded more with reality;

(e) The 18th session of the International Conference of Labour Statisticians, scheduled for 24 November to 5 December 2008 in Geneva, and the need for Africa to be well represented in the discussions that would take place on new statistical standards such as for measuring child labour and working time.

H. Break away sessions:

67. Six working groups were set up on the following thematic issues:

- (a) MDG monitoring;
- (c) National Accounts;
- (d) Informal sector
- (e) Data management;
- (f) Statistical Training; and
- (g) Gender statistics.

I. Plenary session IV: Reports of the working group

68. The rapporteurs of the working groups presented the key topics raised during the group sessions and the outcome recommendations. See annexes for the recommendations of the working groups to the plenary.

69. The meeting discussed and adopted the recommendations of the working groups, and endorsed establishment of the different working groups.

J. Plenary session V: Major upcoming events and programme issues

Major events:

70. Under this agenda item, two presentations were made. South Africa presented on the 57th Session of the International Statistics Institute (ISI) to be held in Durban, South Africa from 16 to 22 August 2009; and AUC presented on the African Charter for Statistics.

71. South Africa invited the Statistical Community of Africa to this unprecedented event in sub-Saharan Africa. The organizers were envisaging a massive participation of around 3000 delegates from around the world. Efforts would be made to bring together a wide representation of young statisticians and women statisticians. The importance of empowering the youth and women in the area of statistical development was also emphasized. Encouraging women to study Statistics and Mathematics and increasing their voice in decisions related to statistical development in Africa should be given due attention.

72. The draft African Charter for Statistics was submitted to the NSO head and key subregional and regional players in statistics in Rwanda. The comments and recommendations of that meeting were included in the version to be submitted to the joint AUC-UNECA conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development this year, before submission to the African Union Summit of Heads of States for adoption.

Programmatic issues

73. Under this agenda item, the secretariat made two presentations: (a) implementation of the work programme 2006-2007 and the work programme 2008-2009; and (b) the follow-up report to the recommendations of CODI-V.

Agenda and date of the second meeting of StatCom-Africa

74. Under this agenda item, the ECA Secretariat presented the provisional agenda and date of the second meeting of StatCom-Africa for discussion. The agenda derived from the main conclusions of the sessions. The established working group would be reporting on work undertaken. The proposed date for the second meeting was 18 to 22 January 2010.

Key discussions points:

75. The meeting highlighted the need for assessment of NSDS implementation on the agenda of the next meeting of StatCom-Africa.

K. Closing session: Main conclusions and recommendations

76. The plenary discussed and amended the draft recommendations presented by the rapporteur before closure of Stat/Com-Africa I by the Director of ACS on behalf of the Executive Secretary of ECA. The conclusions and recommendations of this First Meeting of the Statistical Commission for Africa are presented below:

Preamble

Noting with satisfaction the establishment of the African Centre for Statistics (ACS) following the repositioning exercise that took place at the United Nations Economic Commission for Africa (UNECA) during the year 2006;

Having examined reports on (i) statistical development in Africa, (ii) Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), (iii) the International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa), (iv) the implementation of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF), and (v) basic economic statistics and national accounts;

Considering reports from working groups on the MDGs, National Accounts, Informal Sector, Data Management, Statistical Training, and Gender Statistics;

Taking cognizance of a number of programmatic issues including (i) the implementation of the 2006-2007 and the planned 2008-2009 programmes of work, (ii) the follow-up report of the fifth and last meeting of the Committee on Development Information (CODI-V), the former subsidiary body of the UNECA in charge of statistics;

A. African Statistics Award

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

- (a) Welcomes with appreciation the establishment of an African Statistics Award that will recognize the achievement in statistics of African statisticians to the benefit of Africa;
- (b) Commends the Executive Secretary of UNECA on whom was bestowed an award for his efforts as a champion of statistics in Africa and for his major contribution in revamping the statistical function at UNECA;
- (c) Bestows *Africa Statistics Awards*, on behalf of the African statistical community, on five persons who had, over many years, played leading roles in the development of statistics on the continent namely Mr. Julien Amegandjin, Mr. Oladejo Ajayi, Mr. Kweku deGraft-Johnson, Mr. Lamine Diop, and Mr. Pali Lehohla.

B. Bureau of StatCom-Africa

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

- (a) Commends the outgoing Bureau of the Subcommittee on Statistics of CODI-V for their leadership and excellent work undertaken
- (b) Elects the following Bureau of the first meeting of StatCom-Africa:

Chair: South Africa

Vice-chair: Morocco

Second Vice-chair: Niger

First rapporteur : Uganda

Second rapporteur : Cameroun

C. Statistical Commission for Africa

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

- (a) Takes note of the goals and objectives of the StatCom-Africa as the apex body in charge of statistics and statistical development on the continent;
- (b) Recommends that, in line with the statute for the UN subsidiary bodies, StatCom-Africa should meet every two years and serve as Africa's link to the global statistical system, through the UN Statistical Commission;
- (c) Agrees that, in the year when StatCom-Africa is not meeting, the Bureau of StatCom-Africa, in collaboration with the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD) and the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC), will prepare a report to be presented to the African Conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development and to the global UN

Statistical Commission by the Bureau of StatCom-Africa. In the year that StatCom-Africa meets, the Bureau will report to StatCom-Africa on the progress between the two sessions.

(d) Agrees that the ASSD should focus primarily on supporting the 2010 Round of Population and Housing Censuses, but recommends that it should also serve as a platform for discussions pertaining to other statistical issues including possible topics of interest for StatCom-Africa.

D. Statistical coordination

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes with appreciation the report of the African Development Bank (AfDB) on the African Statistical Coordination Committee (ASCC) and endorses the establishment of such a committee;

(b) Agrees that the membership to the ASCC should be expanded to include regional and sub-regional organizations, the Friends of UNECA, and should report to the bureau of StatCom-Africa;

(c) Requests the ASCC to ensure that their work programme is in line with that of the Committee for the Coordination of Statistical Activities (CCSA) which is a global version of ASCC, to avoid duplication of efforts;

(d) Requests that Terms of Reference (TOR) of the ASCC be prepared and that the Committee work out a reporting mechanism on the measurement, effectiveness and progress of statistical capacity building in Africa.

E. Implementation of the Reference Regional Strategic Framework for Statistical Capacity Building in Africa (RRSF)

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes with appreciation the report of the AfDB on the implementation of National Strategies for the Development of Statistics;

(b) Recognizes that financing statistical activities is a challenging task in Africa and calls on the Forum on African Statistical Development (FASDEV) meeting to consider this issue. It recommends that a mechanism be put in place to measure statistical development which would help donors monitor the progress made by countries and to provide support to those that need it most;

(c) Reiterates the call of CODI that countries (which have not done so yet) design a National Strategy for the Development of Statistics (NSDS) as the overarching framework for statistical capacity development in the region. A study on the effectiveness of different National Statistical Systems (NSSs) already in place should be undertaken to inform countries on lessons learned from the implementation of the existing NSDSs.

(d) Recommends that all NSDSs should include explicitly the strategies for the production of sectoral statistics.

F. International Comparison Programme for Africa (ICP-Africa)

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

- (a) Welcomes with appreciation the report of the AfDB on the ICP-Africa;
- (b) Reiterates the recommendation of CODI-V and urges UNECA and AfDB to set up a National Accounts Programme at the regional level, building on existing successful initiatives such as the work by Afristat, and that the ICP programme supports the compilation of quality national accounts;
- (c) Reiterates the call of CODI-V to countries to continue ICP as a regular activity of NSOs with special emphasis on data dissemination and quality improvement.

G. Statistical Associations

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

- (a) Welcomes with appreciation the report of UNECA stressing the importance of Statistical Associations in statistical advocacy and statistical development;
- (b) Requests that high level policy and decision makers, especially from Statistical Offices, Central Banks and Ministries of Finance, Planning and Economic Development be engaged in the activities of National Statistical Associations of their respective countries;
- (c) Requests that by 2009 every African country should revive dormant National Statistical Associations, or establish new ones;
- (d) Requests the NSOs to provide significant support to National Statistical Associations, including financing, office spaces, and logistical support;
- (e) Urges National Statistical Associations to increase the number of corporate members in the associations, so as to provide a sound financial base;
- (f) Urges Statistical Offices and Associations to increase their international networking with, and support from, international and bilateral organizations, including the International Statistical Institute (ISI), so as to increase their visibility and sustainability of funding;
- (g) Recognizes the need for the participation of National Statistical Associations in meetings of StatCom-Africa as they play significant roles in the statistical systems.
- (h) Requests that UNECA, with the collaboration of other partners, revitalizes the dormant African Statistical Association, and that all National Statistical Associations be encouraged to join.

H. 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes with appreciation the reports of the secretariat of the Friends of UNECA on the status of census undertaking in Africa and on the outcomes of the Africa Symposium on Statistical Development (ASSD);

(b) Requests increased advocacy at the highest level to ensure the commitment of African governments to undertake population censuses in the 2010 round;

(c) Requests UNECA and Friends of UNECA to develop a clear strategy for the conduct of censuses in post-conflict countries, including sharing knowledge on best practices; and support census undertaking in post-conflict countries and in other countries in difficult situations including urgent technical expertise required foremost by Sudan.

I. Millennium Development Goals monitoring

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes with appreciation the report by UNECA on the Progress Towards the Targets of the Millennium Development Goals in Africa and UNSD's report on UN MDG data collection system;

(b) Urges countries to mainstream statistics into national planning and budgeting processes, by ensuring that statistics are prioritized and adequately funded from the national budget;

(c) Urges partners in development to provide sustainable technical and financial assistance for the collection, processing, analysis and use of data for MDG monitoring within the framework of National Statistical Systems.

J. Basic economic statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Takes note with appreciation of the report prepared by Senegal on business registers, and IFORD on administrative data sources;

(b) Urges countries to establish and undertake regular updating of business registers as a priority of national statistical programmes;

(c) Encourages countries to utilize administrative sources of data as a supplement to data collected through traditional statistical surveys.

K. Environment statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Takes note with appreciation of the work undertaken in the area of environment statistics by UNEP, UNECA and UNSD to develop a core set of environmental indicators for data collection and dissemination in Africa;

(b) Endorses the proposal by the UNECA secretariat that a task force on environmental statistics be established, with three main functions: to streamline the core list of environmental indicators for Africa; to prepare a work programme on environmental statistics for the Africa region; and to work closely with the Inter Sectoral Working Group on Environmental Statistics;

(c) Recommends that countries be given the opportunity to participate in the methodological work involved in defining the appropriate set of indicators;

(d) Requests UNECA to provide technical assistance to enable countries to develop their environmental indicators.

L. Employment statistics

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes with appreciation the reports of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) on Key Issues Concerning Employment Statistics in Africa;

(b) Urges countries to undertake regular annual production of employment statistics through censuses, surveys (especially labour force surveys), and administrative records;

(c) Recommends that countries continue to use the official ILO definition of unemployment, in order to maintain consistency with the System of National Accounts (SNA), but that a variety of other indicators (on underemployment, underutilization of labour, etc.) be produced to give a more complete picture of the employment situation;

(d) Encourages its members to participate actively and fully at the 18th International Conference of Labour Statisticians (ICLS) by identifying concerns relating to measurement of employment, and take steps for the ratification of the ILO Convention No. 160 on Labour Statistics (1985).

M. Creation of working groups on thematic areas

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Welcomes and endorses the creation of the following working groups:

- MDG Monitoring in Africa;

- Statistical Training and Capacity Building;
- Data Management;
- Informal Sector;
- National Accounts; and
- Gender Statistics

(b) Endorses the specific recommendations from these groups as presented at the plenary.

N. Other issues

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

(a) Takes note of the presentation of the African Union Commission (AUC) on progress made towards the finalization and submission for adoption of the African Charter for Statistics to African Heads of States;

(b) Takes note of the information provided by South Africa on the 57th Session of the International Statistical Institute (ISI) to be held in Durban in August 2009 and calls upon all African countries to substantively contribute to the success of this continental event. Efforts should be focused on encouraging women statisticians and young statisticians to attend the ISI in large numbers.

O. Date and provisional agenda for the second meeting of StatCom-Africa

The Statistical Commission for Africa:

a) Decides that the second meeting of StatCom-Africa shall be held in Addis Ababa from 18 to 22 January 2010;

b) Approves the provisional agenda for the second meeting of StatCom-Africa as set out in the annex below:

Provisional agenda for the second StatCom-Africa meeting

1. Election of officers.
2. **Adoption of the agenda and other organizational matters.**
 - Documentation
 - Provisional agenda and annotations
 - Note by the Secretariat on the organization of work of the meeting

- 3. National accounts statistics**
Documentation
Report of the Working Group on National Accounts
- 4. Informal sector and surveys**
Documentation
Report of the Working Group on Informal Sector
- 5. Data management**
Documentation
Report of the Working Group on Data Management
- 6. Statistical Training**
Documentation
Report of the Working Group on Statistical Training
- 7. Environment Statistics**
Documentation
Report of the task force on environment statistics
- 8. 2010 Round of Population and Housing Census**
Documentation
Report on population and housing census
- 9. Coordination of statistics**
Documentation
Report of the African Committee on Statistical Coordination
Report of the RRSF implementation
Report on the African Charter for Statistics
Report on the NSDS implementation in Africa
- 10. MDG monitoring**
Documentation
Report of the Working Group on MDGs Monitoring
- 11. Gender statistics**
Documentation
Report on Gender Statistics
- 12. Employment statistics**
Documentation
Report on Employment Statistics
- 13. Programme questions (UNECA/African Centre for Statistics)**

Provisional agenda and dates of the 3rd Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa III)

Annexes: Reports of the Working Groups

Annex I

Report of the Working Group on Development Indicators

Rationale

Many challenges hamper the capacity of African countries to report on progress or lack of progress in reaching the MDGs. These include and are not limited to lack of data on some indicators, data discrepancies between national and international organizations, methodological issues, capacity building, and statistical coordination within the NSS and between NSSes and international organizations.

The Working Group on MDGs is aimed at helping the Statistical Commission for Africa (StatCom-Africa) to deal with challenges confronting African countries in monitoring and evaluating progress made towards the MDGs.

Membership

- African countries
- Subregional and regional organizations
- International organizations

Bureau

Chair of the Group: Kenya

Rapporteurs: 1. Lesotho 2. Niger

ACS is serving as the secretariat to the Group.

Objectives of the Group

The main objective of the group is to support StatCom-Africa in its quest to address MDGs monitoring challenges facing African countries,

Specific objectives are:

- Problems posed by the overall reporting mechanism on the MDGs;
- Lack of data on a number of indicators;
- Lack of some sub national data in support of targeted policy decision-making;
- Discrepancies between country published data and those generated by international organizations;
- Inadequacy of mechanisms for validation with NSOs;
- Estimates made by international organizations for missing country data;
- Lack of coordination among statistical producers and users within the country, between countries and international organizations; and among international organizations;
- Lack of harmonization of concepts, methodologies, standards;

- Lack of sustainability of data production for MDG indicators;
- Lack of human and financial resources, which undermine NSS statistical capacity to generate, process, package and disseminate MDG indicators;

Deliverables

- Detailed Terms of Reference by end of March 2008

Working modalities

- One annual meeting of the group;
- Support some members to attend IAEG and other international meetings on the MDGs;
- Online discussion forum (the secretariat has to provide for this). The online MDGs forum should be running by August 2008 for members to be able to start active discussions.

The Group will be reporting to StatCom-Africa.

Annex II

Report of the Working Group on Informal Sector

The Group on the Informal Sector met on Tuesday, 22 January 2008; it was composed of representatives of Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, AFRISTAT and UNECA.

Background

The informal sector is the main supplier of employment in the region. Its contribution to the reduction of poverty is very significant. On the other hand, the informal sector is not fully considered in the compilation of national accounts despite its considerable contribution to the Gross Domestic Product.

During the session, two presentations were made respectively by AFRISTAT and UNECA. These presentations focused on the methodologies used and the issues encountered in the measurement of the informal sector.

Key issues

Different issues have been highlighted but there are two main difficulties: methodology and definition.

In the region, the main tool used for measuring the informal sector is the 1-2-3 Survey whose methodology is to collect, at the first step, information from households and, at the second step, the informal unit production.

However, other methods of direct measurement of the informal sector or informal employment are also used:

- Household Surveys
- Enterprise Surveys
- Mixed Household and Enterprise surveys
- Employment Surveys

Many definitions are used according to the objective targeted. It has been agreed that there is not a consensus even in the region; the definition varies from country to country. Also, at global level, there is not an agreed definition. However, ILO gave a definition based on employment. In this order, several criteria are used:

- Social security
- Bookkeeping
- Registration
- Size of the unit

There are also other considerations related to the informal employees in the formal sector to be taken into account; the main challenge is to identify both informal activity as well as informal employees working in the formal sector. The group noticed also the issue concerning measurement of the output in contribution to the GDP.

Recommendations

1. The group expressed a real need for harmonization of definitions and methodologies within the region.
2. The group recommended revisiting of existing methodologies carried out by South Africa, India, Ghana, AFRISTAT, etc.
3. Discussions on the informal sector needed to be deepened by the working group under the leadership of AFRISTAT.
4. The group called upon other countries to join them to reinforce the pertinence of the discussions since the informal sector is very important in the region
5. The group called upon StatCom-Africa to earmark funds to support the informal sector working group to meet.

Annex III

Report of the Working Group on National Accounts

The Working Group on National Accounts began its work by setting up its bureau as follows:

President: AfDB

Rapporteur: AFRISTAT

Attendance:

It was attended by representatives of the following countries: Congo, Cote d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Ethiopia, Gabon, Kenya, Mauritius, Mauritania, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Zambia, Zimbabwe;

The following organizations attended the meeting: AFRISTAT, AfDB, and the African Union Commission,

The meeting was also attended by the following external partners: INSEE, and Johns Hopkins University (USA).

Background:

The Working Group noted that the major challenge for African countries is to define an African strategy for the implementation of the SNA 93 to ensure the continuous production of national accounts and the use of up-to-date methodology for this production. Countries are facing a very strong demand for the monitoring of the PRSP and MDGs. The group also noted the variable capability of countries in producing national accounts.

Agenda:

The Working Group examined five points that seemed urgent in addressing the concerns:

1) **Strengthening the capacity of NSOs in national accounts:** The discussions highlighted: great mobility in national accountants, and the lack of training on the concepts and principles of the SNA 93; the technical assistance problems; and the multiplicity of tasks of the national accountants. To overcome these difficulties, the following solutions were proposed: country assessments; organization of workshops and seminars on national accounts; capacity building for the analysis of national accounts; the use of powerful software tools for the compilation of national accounts; specific support to fragile countries; the motivation of national accountants; strengthening of South-South cooperation and consideration of other areas including satellite accounts, the regional accounts and non-profit institutions.

2) **Improvement of basic data:** The Working Group noted deficiencies at the basic data level used in compiling national accounts: the problems of quality; timely availability of data; lack of consistent sets for a good analysis of aggregates; and problems related to the change in the base year of accounts.

3) **Methodological problems:** Given the problems of basic data and the lack of human resources, it is necessary to develop and implement different methodologies for each country: the use of adjusted classifications of activities and products; taking into account a sample of enterprises; better consideration of the data on the informal sector, the development of databases on methodologies; the definition and use of appropriate indicators; and definition of adequate results tables.

4) **Implementation of SNA 93:** Widening use in all countries implementing the SNA 93, and taking into account the revision of the SNA 93 that is underway.

5) **Coordination of technical and financial partners:** Better coordination support of technical and financial partners is necessary in the context of NSDS in countries.

The Working Group will draw up terms of reference (TORs) and the timetable for its activities.

Recommendations:

To ensure implementation of a sustainable system of production of national accounts and dispose of reliable economic aggregates for all countries, the Working Group recommended:

1 - The development within three months of the African strategy for the implementation of SNA 93. This task is assigned to AfDB, UNECA, the African Union Commission, AFRISTAT and the Regional Economic Communities.

2 – To reflect in the revision of SNA 93 specific issues for developing countries, particularly those in Africa, such as agriculture and catastrophic events.

Annex IV

Report of the Working Group on Data Management

Working Group No. 4, composed of nine people (see attached list), considered the theme on data management. The bureau was established as follows:

- President: Akou Adjogou, ECOWAS
- Secretary: Dorothy Ouissika, AFRISTAT
- Rapporteur: Buzingo Déogratias, INS, Burundi

Two presentations were made:

- Data Platform / World Bank and AfDB, presented by Mr. Issa Ouedraogo, InWent Consultant;
- StatBase / UNECA, presented by Mr. Molla Hunegnaw, UNECA.

At the end of the presentations, and after an analysis of the challenges and needs of countries, the group recognized the importance of databases in the storage, management and dissemination of data. They noted the highly technical nature of the issues raised in the presentations, among them the lack of people with extensive experience in the field of databases, with the exception of the two presenters. However, they established the following findings:

- The existence of a variety of applications (DEVINFO, STATBASE, DataPlatform, FIVIMS, ISMI, LDB), according to their specialization and objectives;
- The project approach, external financing, and experiences with the setting up of databases in countries;
- Low appropriation of tools;
- Low mastery of tools, which does not allow a complete knowledge of their content and use for the real needs of the country;
- Difficulties in regular updating of databases.

It followed from the above that countries faced difficulties in choosing the appropriate type of databases. The group also noted the existence in the countries and within the regional and sub-regional organizations, of centralized databases that offer no possibility of communication between them (for exchange of data and metadata).

The group therefore recommended:

1. The establishment of a strategic reference framework for data management under the auspices of ECA;
2. The development by each country of a data management strategy;
3. The establishment by ECA of a group of experts to assess the countries' utilization of databases and to provide a guide to help countries in their choice.

List of participants :

Noms et prénoms	Institutions	Pays
Mohammed H. Ratab	NSO	Tanzania
Zaam Ssali	Office of the Prime Minister	Uganda
Begizen Yaregal	Statistical association	Ethiopia
Buzingo Déogracias	INS	Burundi
Jose Awong Alene	AUC	Ethiopia
Dorothee Ouissika	AFRISTAT	Mali
Issa Ouedraogo	InWent	Germany
Molla Hunegnaw	UNECA	Ethiopia
Akou Adjogou	ECOWAS	Nigeria

Annex V

Report of the Working Group on Statistical Training

Proceedings

1. The Working Group on Statistical Training met on 22 January 2008. The following bureau was elected:

Facilitator: PARIS21

Rapporteur: ENSEA

2. Two presentations were made: (a) PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Training , and (b) SADC Project on Statistical Training.

Key discussions points:

3. The participants appreciated the SADC Project on Statistical training. It was suggested that SADC share its experiences with other Regional Economic Communities.
4. The participants were concerned by the slow progress of the recommendations of PARIS21 Task Team on Statistical Training;
5. Studies undertaken by ACBF on training as well as the Statistical Training Project for PALOP countries were also highlighted.

Recommendations of the Working Group

6. The Working Group recommended:
 - (a) The 2008 theme for celebration of African Statistics Day should be on Statistical Training;
 - (b) The creation of a statistical training centre for PALOP countries. It was further recommended that there should be brainstorming on short-term actions, in order to train statisticians from PALOP;
 - (c) A Working Group should be created in close collaboration with the PARIS21 Task Team on Training in order to facilitate reporting mechanisms to StatCom-Africa;
 - (d) A forum of Directors of NSOs and Statistical Training Centres should be created as was the case during the implementation of the STPA;
 - (e) Permanent financing mechanisms for statistical training should be put in place; and
 - (f) Mechanisms for harmonization of curricula.

Annex VI

Report of the Working Group on Gender Statistics

I. Introduction

Several gender awareness-raising initiatives have not resulted in appreciable change in statistical programmes of NSOs and other data producers. For the awareness programmes to work, there is need to:

- a) Accompany them with practical examples of how to engender statistics;
- b) Tap into existing initiatives; and
- c) Formulate focused programmes at both national and regional levels.

Lessons must be learnt from some best practices in the area:

- a) Annual Gender Statistics meetings of statisticians, users, training institutions at the regional level in Latin America (hosted by Mexico); and
- b) Meeting frequently makes them more and more conscious about gender issues and enables them to learn from shared experiences how to be gender-responsive on all issues.

II. The Working Group made the following recommendations:

1. Regional programme to be set up by UNECA
2. Regional high-level policy dialogue conference on gender statistics under the auspices of UNECA
3. Setting up of a gender statistics network based on GESNET
4. Set up a working group on gender statistics
5. Development of country gender statistics strategies drawn from the regional programme

III. The meeting discussed and proposed the following components for the Regional Programme on Gender Statistics

1. Training component

Engendering curricula for:

- a) Statistical Training Centres
- b) NSO In-Service training programmes

Development of a Gender Statistics course module for:

- a) Statistical Training Centres
- b) NSO In-Service training programmes

Refresher (on-the-job) gender statistics courses for the already employed statisticians

2. Awareness creation component

- ✓ Development, production and utilization of gender advocacy materials
- ✓ Conducting workshops and seminars for various target audiences.

3. Networking component

- ✓ Creation of a gender statistics network involving all stakeholders (Africa GESNET initiative)
- ✓ Uploading useful resources/literature to be accessible to all.

4. Engendering statistics in NSOs

- ✓ Mainstreaming gender in the NSO structures
- ✓ Setting up an Auditing Unit in NSOs

5. Engendering censuses, surveys and administrative record systems. Gender-responsive

- ✓ Data capture instruments
- ✓ Field processes,
- ✓ Analysis
- ✓ Report writing
- ✓ Dissemination processes

6. Research

- ✓ Compile and disseminate statistics on gender
- ✓ Conduct gender-related impact analysis
- ✓ Develop methodologies for the production of gender statistics

IV. The discussion on the Africa Regional conference on Gender Statistics made the following proposal:

Purpose: A high-level policy dialogue aimed at sensitizing policymakers and people of influence

- NSO Executives
- Key Sector Executives
- Training Centres
- Key users

A task force (working committee) to be formed to work out the details of the regional programme and the regional conference.

V. Country Programmes

The regional agenda should work as a guide to the different national activities on gender statistics; and A mechanism for monitoring and evaluation should be set up at both national and regional levels